

What causes erectile dysfunction?

Erectile dysfunction often has more than one cause. Many diseases can damage nerves, arteries, and muscles. Some can lead to ED, such as

- high blood pressure
- diabetes, when your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high
- clogged arteries
- heart and blood vessel disease
- chronic kidney disease
- **multiple sclerosis**, a disease that attacks the nerves
- treatments for **prostate** cancer, including **radiation**, surgery to remove the prostate, and hormone treatments
- injury to the penis, spinal cord, prostate, bladder, or pelvis
- surgery for bladder cancer
- Peyronie's disease, in which scar tissue, called a plaque, forms in the penis

Unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as smoking, drinking too much alcohol, using illegal drugs, being overweight, and not exercising, can lead to ED.

Mental health problems such as the following can also cause or worsen ED:

- depression
- fear of sexual failure
- guilt
- low self-esteem
- stress
- worry

Even when ED has a physical cause, mental health problems can make ED worse. For example, a physical problem may slow your sexual arousal, which may make you more nervous and worsen your ED.

In addition, ED can be a side effect of many common medicines. A small number of ED cases result from low **testosterone**, a male hormone.